

Mary Cecil Cantrill #2 House
117 North Mulberry Street
Georgetown
Scott County
Kentucky

HABS No. KY-222

HABS
KY,
105-GEOTO,
2-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Southeast Region
Department of the Interior
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

HABS
KY
105-GEOTO,
2-

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

MARY CECIL CANTRILL #2 HOUSE

HABS No. KY-222

Location: 117 North Mulberry Street
Georgetown, Kentucky
Scott county, Kentucky

U.S.G.S. topographic quadrangle: Georgetown (7.5)
Universal Transverse Mercator coordinates:
16.712800.4231620

Present Owner: Georgetown Urban Renewal and Community Development
Agency

Present Occupant: vacant

Present Use: none (scheduled for demolition)

Statement of Significance: The Cantrill #2 house is an example of a turn-of-the-century residence built for African-American citizens in a small southern city. Its shotgun plan is typical of houses built on narrow urban lots by or for working-class families, often of African-American ethnicity. Its original owner, a white woman with considerable rental property, was largely responsible for the development of the small neighborhood in which this house is located as a small African-American community occupied largely by renters. Thus, this site is an example of a specific ethnic and urban settlement pattern for the late 19th-early 20th century.

PART I: HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. **Date of erection:** circa 1897-1901 (Cantrill purchased the lot in 1897 but the deed was not filed until 1902; the house is shown on the 1901 Sanborn insurance map).

2. **Architect/Builder:** unknown; house construction probably authorized by Mary Cecil Cantrill. An earlier house belonging to Betsey Robinson was probably demolished and replaced by the present structure.

3. **Original and subsequent owners:**

1842 deed, recorded in Volume R, p. 401, Particular Baptist Church to George L. Vallandingham. This deed refers to subsequent sale of property to Robert Garlick, and then to Mark Kershaw.

1859 deed, recorded in Volume 4, p. 535, Mark and Elizabeth Kershaw to Betsey Robinson, "a free woman of color". (Half of Betsey Robinson's house was built on the rear of the lot containing the house at 117 North Mulberry Street).

1896 will of Betsey Robinson, produced June, 1896, recorded in Will Volume T, p. 21.

1897 court case, recorded in Scott Circuit Court Case files #338, Betsey Robinson Administrator vs. Willie and Henry May, Claiborne Robinson and Willie Robinson (ordered lots to be sold to settle estate; Mary C. Cantrill purchased all lots but deed was not filed until 1902)

1903 deed, January 1, 1903, recorded in Volume 35, p. 340, James E. and Mary C. Cantrill to George V. Payne, Trustee of Mary C. Cantrill.

1925 deed, November 16, 1925, recorded in Volume 54, p. 597, W. R. Hall et al. to Trustees, Wesley Chapel M. E. Church.

1929 deed, December 28, 1929, recorded in Volume 58, p. 131, Trustees, Wesley Chapel M.E. Church to E. B. and Bettie W. Davis.

1946 deed, August 17, 1946, recorded in Volume 72, p. 351, Betty W. Davis et al. to Cecil and Mamie Scott.

1990 deed, August 31, 1990, recorded in Volume 186, p. 222, Cecil Scott to Georgetown Urban Renewal and Community Development Agency.

4. **Alterations and additions:** Two rear rooms were added between 1901 and 1907; the house probably once had two front doors to access two equal-sized apartments; the rear porch is a post-1925 addition.

B. Historical Context: The Cantrill #2 house was built by Mary Cecil Cantrill, a white businesswoman who owned many rental properties in Georgetown. She built this shotgun house on what was originally the house lot of Betsey Robinson, a "free woman of

color", who purchased and moved onto her land in 1859. Robinson's will split her land tract into four lots, and divided her house in half between two of the lots, the dividing line being a east-west running partition that separated two equal-sized apartments. The Robinson house was located on the west side of what later became two lots. It was apparently demolished before the Cantrill #2 house was built. Cantrill rented the house to African-American tenants as did later owners. Its double shotgun plan is typical of late 19th-early 20th century housing for African-American working-class families. The shed roof is less common than a gabled roof but this roof type is repeated on most of the neighboring rental houses on North Mulberry and Oregon Streets and Post Office Alley.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement: The property is a one story, frame, vernacular, turn-of-the-century, double occupant shotgun dwelling. Similar to other homes in the immediate neighborhood, it has a four-bay front (with one entry removed or covered), a shed roof with parapet, a two-bay shed porch and clapboard siding. This house is shown as a single occupancy on the 1901 Sanborn insurance map; despite this distinction, subsequent insurance maps of 1907, 1912 and 1925 show the structure as a double occupancy. These later maps also indicate that house was extended to include what is now the two rear rooms by 1907. The small back porch was apparently not added until after 1925 as it does not appear on available Sanborn insurance maps.

1. Architectural character: This house merits recording because it is an example of a subtype of the shotgun house plan, frequently associated with 19th and 20th century African-American working-class neighborhoods. Its shed roof treatment is a less common variant of the classic gable-roofed shotgun house. It is shown on a 1901 insurance map as a single occupancy dwelling but was extended and made into a double occupancy house by 1907.

2. Condition of fabric: poor

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: 29' 8" by 40', excluding porches.

2. Foundations: random limestone block foundation with loose sandy mortar and concrete re-chinking; poured concrete beneath front porch.

3. Walls: sawn wood frame with clapboard siding and cornerboard trim.

4. Structural system, framing: dimensional lumber;

assumed to be balloon framing.

5. **Porches, stoops, balconies, bulkheads:** two-bay, shed front porch is centered and shelters one front door (space for second door now covered by siding), supported by chamfered square wood posts.

6. **Chimneys:** one central brick chimney.

7. **Openings: (By elevations)**

The front (east) elevation is divided into four bays with three actual openings (window-door-blank-window). Four small square openings (boarded) in the parapet frieze correspond to the first floor bays. A two-bay shed porch covers two central bays; two windows are vertical, divided 2/2 sash with simple trim and cornice.

The south wall is divided into four irregular bays with two 2/2 sash windows, an entry door (into the center room) and a small casement window.

The rear (west) elevation has been recently altered with plywood applied to the original siding. A screened shed porch projects from the rear wall.

The north side wall has three regular bays of 2/2 sash windows (one in each of two front rooms) and a small casement window in the rear room.

The house is built on a north slope, so the south wall rests near grade and the north wall rests on a built-up stone foundation.

8. **Roof and cornice:** shed type, unknown covering; slightly projecting molded wood cornice.

C. Description of Interior:

1. **Floor plans:** The front of the building has a one-and-a-half story elevation but this decreases to one story in the rear. Only the first floor is finished for occupancy. The interior floor plan is presently organized for single occupancy but double occupancy was more probable during its early 20th century use. Each side of the house is three rooms deep. The north half of the house includes a front room (14' 3" by 14' 10"), a middle room (14' 3" square) and a smaller rear room (14' 3" by 8' 7"). The rear room exits to a small back porch. The south side of the house has a front room (14' by 14' 10") that connects to the middle room on the south side and the front room on the north side. The middle room is 14' 3" square. It connects to a small room (8' 5" by 8' 7") and a bathroom (5' 5" by 8' 7") that were created from

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what would have been an original smaller rear room (perhaps used as a kitchen for the south apartment). The south side has an entryway on the south side.

2. **Flooring:** original tongue and groove pine flooring covered with carpeting.

3. **Wall and ceiling finish:** original plaster with some rooms having panelling on the walls (4' by 8' sheets).

4. **Openings:** Most doors have molded architrave trim with corner bullseye blocks; molded baseboard trim is removed in the rooms with panelling.

5. **Decorative features and trim:** early 20th century paired, 15 light French doors separate the front hall and parlor rooms. No fireplace mantles remain.

D. Site

1. **General setting and orientation:** The house is located on the west side of North Mulberry Street, and fronts east.

2. **Historic landscape design:** none

3. **Outbuildings:** none

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. **Original architectural drawings:** none

B. **Early views:** none

C. **Interviews:** none

D. **Bibliography**

1. **Primary and unpublished sources:** Scott county deed books and circuit court records (see Section I.3); Ann Bolton Bevins, 1989, INVOLVEMENT OF BLACKS IN SCOTT COUNTY COMMERCE DURING THE POSTBELLUM PERIOD (1865-1918). Manuscript on file, Kentucky Heritage Council, Frankfort, Kentucky.

2. **Secondary and published sources:** none known

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

The HABS documentation of this and other buildings is being performed to comply with the requirements of a Memorandum of

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Agreement (MOA) between the City of Georgetown and the Kentucky Heritage Council. The City of Georgetown received a CDBG grant to acquire these buildings in order to demolish them, owing to their poor condition and because they are unsuitable for rehabilitation and reuse. The MOA required that the structures be documented according to HABS criteria and accepted by HABS prior to demolition.

The following people and firms contributed to the documentation effort:

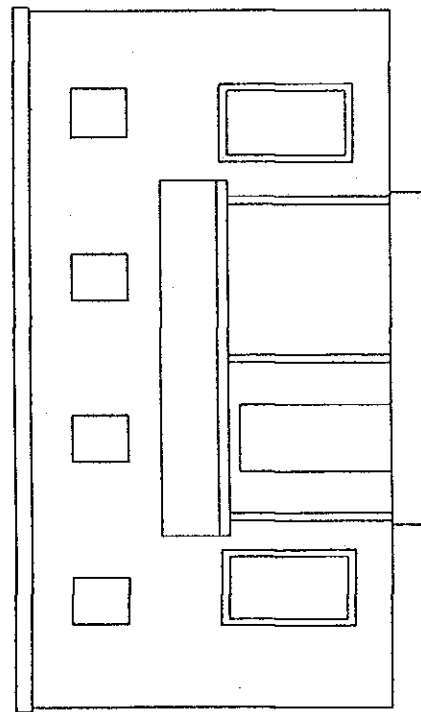
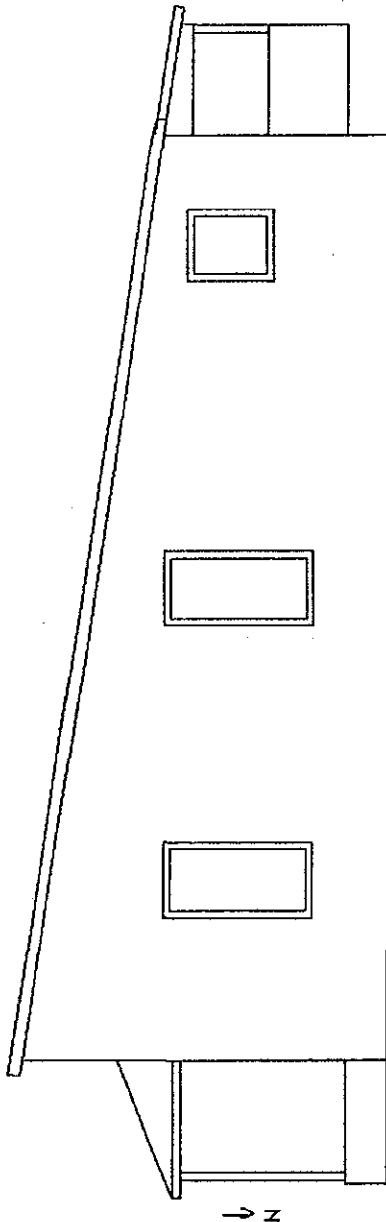
Charlie Perkins, City Attorney, Georgetown, Kentucky
John Coyle, Georgetown Housing Authority
William Hamilton, Mayor's Office, Georgetown, Kentucky
Will Linder & Associates, Consultants, Inc., Berea, Kentucky
Chris Amos, architectural historian, Amos & Burry, Inc.,
Shelbyville, Kentucky
Ann Bolton Bevins, architectural historian, Georgetown, Kentucky

Prepared by: Nancy O'Malley
Title: Research Associate in Anthropology
Affiliation: University of Kentucky, Lexington
Date: November 15, 1991

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SCALE

— = 1' — = 5' — = 10'



--> NORTH

117 N. MULBERRY
GEORGETOWN, KY
JUNE 24, 1991

